



YOUR TICKET TO NATURE

www.outdoorexpress.fi

OUR CHALLENGE

Tampere aims to be the leading urban lake and nature tourism destination in Finland. Nature is our key attraction and we need to provide better access especially to national parks for our visitors.

There are three National Parks and several nature and hiking reserves in the Tampere region within 100 km distance from the city centre. Most of these are difficult to reach especially for international visitors due to lack of public transport connections. Only viable option for tourists has been car rental. Private car is the main mode of transport also for locals and domestic visitors. Nature destinations are located in sparsely populated areas, where public transport is not economically feasible and could not serve tourists properly.

Majority of the visits to national parks of the region are short day trips, average length of stay being approximately 5-6 hours. Short visits combined with long distances travelled mostly by car generate negative environmental impacts and high carbon footprint per visitor, which is in dire contrast with enjoying and preserving purity of nature, the very essence of nature travel.

To tackle these challenges we decided to plan and create a sustainable and affordable mass transit service to nature suited for the needs of local, domestic and international visitors.



OUR SOLUTION

Outdoor Express shuttlebus service – easy and sustainable access to National Parks and nature attractions – directly from Tampere city centre for visitors and locals.

Service model was first piloted in 2022 with REACT-EU funded Sustainable Tourism Mobility project. For summer 2023 season was extended and all three national parks were added as destinations. Outdoor Express operated on Saturdays and Sundays, departing in the morning and arriving back to Tampere in the evening. This enabled both short day visits and overnight stay in the park, which was greatly appreciated. All the national parks had restaurant services where the bus was parked during the visit. Seitsemien National Park also has a Nature Center with equipment rental services and special emphasis has been taken to enable accessible nature experiences in the park.

Focus group for marketing Outdoor Express were locals from Tampere city area and domestic visitors from Helsinki and other cities in Southern Finland. Timetables were also linked to train connections to enable sustainable mobility chain for domestic visitors from other cities and regions.

Municipal public funding was used for service development and to back up market risk for the bus company. Public support also enabled keeping ticket prices moderate, which provides more equal nature travel opportunities for locals. Outdoor Express service was coordinated by Ecofellows, a non-profit sustainability organization owned by City of Tampere.



SCHEDULE AND TICKETS

July 2023

1.7.2023 Isojärvi National Park
2.7.2023 Isojärvi National Park
8.7.2023 Helvetinjärvi National Park
9.7.2023 Helvetinjärvi National Park
15.7.2023 Seitsemien National Park
16.7.2023 Seitsemien National Park
22.7.2023 Isojärvi National Park
23.7.2023 Isojärvi National Park
29.7.2023 Helvetinjärvi National Park
30.7.2023 Helvetinjärvi National Park

Ticket sales

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August 2023

5.8.2023 Seitsemien National Park
6.8.2023 Seitsemien National Park
12.8.2023 Isojärvi National Park
13.8.2023 Isojärvi National Park
19.8.2023 Helvetinjärvi National Park
20.8.2023 Helvetinjärvi National Park
26.8.2023 Seitsemien National Park
27.8.2023 Seitsemien National Park

10:00 Departure Tampere Railway Station
17:30 Arrival to Tampere Railway Station

Ticket Prices

Adults 10 €
Children 5 € (4-15 years)
Bicycle 3 €
Prices for one way trip



STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION

Outdoor Express service was made possible with wide collaboration between regional and national stakeholders

Service is coordinated by Ecofellows Ltd. Ecofellows tendered and selected the bus operator Atrö Vuolle, planned the schedule and created website and visual marketing materials for Outdoor Express. Marketing is done in wide cooperation utilizing the marketing channels and expertise of Visit Tampere, Ecofellows, Metsähallitus and other partners.

Key stakeholders:

Metsähallitus is a state enterprise governing Finland's state-owned lands and waters. Parks & Wildlife Finland unit manages protected areas and cultural heritage sites and provides charge-free services for hikers in these areas. Their role is essential for service development, reaching the customers and engaging the entrepreneurs in the national parks for cooperation and marketing.

Tickets are sold via Matkahuolto webshop and app. Matkahuolto is a nationwide service and marketing company for bus transport and one of the key partners in developing Outdoor Express service.

Development and operation costs of the service are covered with ticket sale revenue and financial support from City of Tampere, City of Ylöjärvi and Ruovesi municipality together with Parks & Wildlife unit of Metsähallitus. Municipalities also cooperated in marketing and development.



IMPACTS AND RESULTS

Inspiring brand and high quality service creation are the main strengths which make Outdoor Express unique. Outdoor Express business and service model can be easily adopted in any city destination surrounded by national parks or other nature attractions, in Finland and internationally.

Ticket sales was our key success indicator. Several weekends were fully booked and average usage rate was over 70 %, which is a great result for a weather prone service. Tampere university also gathered user experience data and feedback from entrepreneurs in national parks, which was predominantly positive.

Environmental impacts:

- Effective and sustainable mobility option for private cars, reducing CO2 emissions of nature tourism. Sustainability of the busses was one of the criteria for selecting the bus company to operate Outdoor Express

Economic impacts:

- Outdoor Express customers used especially restaurant services in the national parks strengthening the local economy.

Social impacts:

- Outdoor Express provides more socially equal and also accessible opportunities to reach and enjoy national parks. Nature travel and hiking has also benefits for wellbeing and health.

"Excellent service, have been waiting for such for years now!"



OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Engaging domestic and international visitors

Locals are the core customer group but to utilize the full potential of the service we need to reach domestic and international customers – longer stay, positive economic impacts

Longer season and more business opportunities

Linking activities, equipment rental, accommodation and other services to provide more comprehensive travel experiences and packages, also for business travel and MICE sector.

Strengthening the brand and partnerships

Ensuring long term development and continuity with City of Tampere and key partners.
Finding strategic partners for marketing, service creation and also financial cooperation.

Scaling and replicating the service

Duplicating the service and Outdoor Express brand to other Finnish city destinations in cooperation with Metsähallitus and Matkahuolto. Same brand and service in several destinations makes it more attractive and easily adoptable for customers and tourists.

Focusing on sustainability

Exploring options for utilizing electric or other low carbon bus services, enhancing social sustainability, accessibility, wellbeing benefits and effects for local economy.





Contacts and further information

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TAMPERE.
FINLAND

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European Union
European Regional
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Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



REACT-EU Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the
Territories of Europe